

VZCZCXR09446

OO RUEHCI

DE RUEHKT #0858/01 1171359

ZNY CCCCC ZZH

O 271359Z APR 07

FM AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU

TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5761

INFO RUEHB/AMEMBASSY BEIJING PRIORITY 5669

RUEHLM/AMEMBASSY COLOMBO PRIORITY 5971

RUEHKA/AMEMBASSY DHAKA PRIORITY 1191

RUEHIL/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD PRIORITY 3993

RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY 5289

RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI PRIORITY 1365

RUEHCI/AMCONSUL KOLKATA PRIORITY 3419

RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY 2639

RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY

RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC PRIORITY

RHMFISS/CDR USPACOM HONOLULU HI PRIORITY

RUEAAIA/CIA WASHDC PRIORITY

RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 KATHMANDU 000858

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/27/2017

TAGS: PREL PGOV MASS PREF KDEM BT NP

SUBJECT: NEPAL: PM SAYS NOVEMBER ELECTION LIKELY; POLICE

WILL ENFORCE LAW AND ORDER

Classified By: Ambassador James F. Moriarty. Reasons 1.4 (b/d).

Summary

---

¶1. (C) Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala told the Ambassador April 27 that the eight parties would set a date for the Constituent Assembly election "very soon," likely for late November 2007 following Nepal's autumn holidays. The Ambassador stressed that an election date announcement was key to keeping the peace process on track and also encouraged the PM to work with relevant ministries to develop a timeline of necessary pre-election tasks. The Ambassador implored the PM to address the dire security environment in Nepal's districts; the PM responded that he was confident the police would begin to enforce law and order. The Ambassador informed the PM that the 4,600 stored U.S. rifles planned for the Nepal Army had to be redirected for use in Lebanon. Expressing appreciation for the GON's support in moving forward Bhutanese refugee resettlement, the Ambassador requested the PM's continued assistance on exit procedures for the refugees. In response to the PM's inquiries regarding Chinese policy in Nepal, the Ambassador emphasized that China's number one priority was Tibet, and that the U.S. had no indication that the Chinese government was providing support to the Maoists.

PM Anticipates November Election

---

¶2. (C) The Ambassador stressed to Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala on April 27 that to keep the peace process on track, the GON had to work with the Election Commission (EC) and announce a new Constituent Assembly (CA) election date. The PM said the eight parties would announce the date "very soon" and he thought the election would follow the conclusion of Nepal's final fall festival, Chhat, on November 16. The Ambassador stressed that, once the government had decided on a date, the EC, Home Ministry, and Ministry for Peace and Reconstruction, as well as the UN Mission to Nepal (UNMIN), would have to set a series of milestones to ensure the GON accomplished necessary pre-election tasks. First and foremost, a dialogue with marginalized groups had to be conducted to ensure their buy-in to the electoral process. A constitutional amendment and election bill would have to be passed, Phase II vetting of cantonments (e.g. expulsion of

non-combatants and minors) completed, and law and order re-established across the country to ensure a secure environment for the election.

Law-and-Order Crisis Continues

---

¶3. (C) The Ambassador highlighted to the PM the continued security crisis across Nepal's countryside, imploring the PM to enforce law and order against Maoist abuses and address instability across Nepal's southern Terai due to agitating marginalized groups. The Ambassador said that, in recent trips outside the capital, he and Emboffs had witnessed no improvements in the security situation. Emboffs had heard reports that the Maoist Youth Communist League were teaching recruits how to steal ballot boxes; moreover Maoist perpetrators of violence faced no legal ramifications. The PM said he was confident that the police would now begin to enforce law and order. The Ambassador stressed that the Nepal Police needed more than just additional resources, they needed strong leadership and a morale boost to carry out their jobs.

Ambassador Asks PM for Messages to Carry to Washington

---

¶4. (C) The Ambassador said he would be returning to Washington for consultations and asked the PM if he had any messages to convey. The PM said, "you know what is best," agreeing with the Ambassador that the focus had to be on securing additional resources to support a successful CA election. The PM asked whether the U.S. was reconsidering its terrorist label for the Maoists. The Ambassador said the

KATHMANDU 00000858 002 OF 003

U.S. had no intention of reconsidering the terrorist label or U.S. contact policy with the Maoists until they changed their behavior and joined the political mainstream.

PM Pushing UNMIN to Begin Vetting Process

---

¶5. (C) Dr. Suresh Chalise, the PM's Foreign Policy Advisor, said he had been pushing Ian Martin, Chief of UNMIN, to begin Phase II of arms management -- vetting of the 30,000 purported People's Liberation Army (PLA) combatants in 28 cantonment sites under UN monitoring. Chalise expressed frustration that the Maoists were paralyzing the process and stressed that Martin had to "assert himself" to encourage forward movement in arms management. The Ambassador agreed that the vetting process needed to begin and implored the PM as well to pressure the Maoists to that end. The PM asked the Ambassador what future options the GON might explore beyond integrating Maoists into GON security forces. The Ambassador said that the GON should look to the international community for help in rehabilitation, such as vocational training for agriculture and industry. If the Nepal Army were downsized, the Ambassador added, former soldiers would also need options for employment.

Ambassador Informs PM that Rifles Were Redirected

---

¶6. (C) The Ambassador told the PM that the 4,600 U.S. rifles planned for the Nepal Army that had been sitting in storage facilities, had been redirected for use in Lebanon. (Note: The PM had no immediate reaction to this news. End note.)

Exit Permission Next Hurdle for Refugee Resettlement

---

¶7. (C) The Ambassador expressed his appreciation to the PM for the GON's cooperation in moving forward on U.S. resettlement efforts for Bhutanese refugees. The Ambassador emphasized that the next hurdle would be securing exit

permission for the approximately 1,000 Bhutanese per month that would need to be processed, asking for the PM's and Chalise's support in tackling this necessary step for successful resettlement.

PM Curious on China's Priorities in Nepal

---

¶ 18. (C) The PM asked the Ambassador for his thoughts on China's policy in Nepal; Koirala appeared to imply that there might be a regional rivalry between India and China in Nepal and that China might be secretly supporting the Maoists.

(Note: The PM was scheduled to meet with the new Chinese Ambassador later in the day. End Note.) The Ambassador emphasized that China's number one priority in Nepal was Tibet, which colored all other policies. While not pushing a particular type of government for Nepal, China was interested in stability at its border, the Ambassador said, and would not want to see Nepal splinter along ethnic lines. The Ambassador hypothesized that China wanted to keep communication channels open with the Maoists in case they were able to take over the government. However, the United States had no knowledge of the Chinese government providing support to the Maoists; any arms coming to the Maoists from China were likely through black market and unofficial channels. The Ambassador noted India's political, cultural, economic and historic ties to Nepal; China appeared to acknowledge India's dominance in Nepal.

Comment

---

¶ 19. (C) While it is heartening to hear the PM will work toward the announcement of a new Constituent Assembly election date in November, the eight parties will have to agree. This is always an arduous process and one fraught with the potential for a variety of outcomes. Current calls by the Maoists for a referendum on the monarchy or a

KATHMANDU 00000858 003 OF 003

declaration of a republic could easily undermine the search for consensus. Without an official election date and a timeline of necessary pre-election tasks, Nepal is not likely to make much progress toward peace and democracy. We will continue to push to end the ambiguity, highlighting the importance of an election for Nepal's future as a democracy. The PM's seeming passivity on enforcing law and order is disturbing. We will keep up the pressure on the GON at the highest levels to direct and support the Nepal Police to counter Maoist abuses and deal responsibly with agitating groups in Nepal's southern Terai. Without improved law and order, the potential for a credible CA election will disappear.

MORIARTY